

SPEAKER BARRETT: I'm sorry. Six minutes, Senator Baack.

SENATOR BAACK: Okay. I would like to yield the rest of my time to Senator Withem, because he was a co-introducer of LB 719, and I will give him that time.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Withem, proceed.

SENATOR WITHEM: Yes, I'd like to yield the time back to Senator Baack, please. (Laughter.) Thank you, Senator Baack. I appreciate your giving me some time to speak on this. LB 719 was a bill that was brought to me, actually, by the...originally it was a bill that was sponsored and endorsed by our local county commissioners when they were in the process of attempting to create an enhanced 911 system. Frankly, my county, as I understand it, Senator Hartnett, has gone ahead and done this pretty much. So it's not something that's going to be a terribly direct benefit back to our particular county. Last year it was the US West that indicated they thought that this was a good product, the enhanced 911, and more communities ought to have the ability to participate in the program. So we introduced the bill primarily on their behalf. At the same time, on the other end of the state, Senator Baack's constituents were very interested in enhancing their 911 program. It's a really fascinating concept, this enhanced 911. It is really one of the things that we can pass in here, though actually in a documented fashion will save lives. Particularly as you get to the remote areas of the state the ability to communicate quickly, when there is an emergency, and to locate exactly where that spot is, is of prime importance. With the enhanced 911, the individual can dial 911, the 911 equipment locks in on that location, will tell the emergency personnel what the location is, what the phone number is and be able to dispatch help immediately. There have been cases where a person maybe can get to the phone, a child can get to the phone and dial 911, but can't give directions to the home under our current system. Or the individual may, in fact, be choking and not be able to communicate over the telephone. So it is a system that definitely enhances the quality of life throughout our state, and I think maybe more so in some of the remote portions of our state. Problem is it's a very expensive system. And so with the ability to place the 50 cent surcharge on the lines of individuals that are getting the benefit of this service, it's a way in which local communities can, in fact, pay for their 911 equipment. I think it's a good bill. I